

VZCZCXYZ0002  
PP RUEHWEB

DE RUEHDO #0008/01 0071413  
ZNY SSSSS ZZH  
P 071413Z JAN 10  
FM AMEMBASSY DOHA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9610  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY  
INFO RUEAHQA/OSAF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY  
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY  
RHMFISS/USAFCENT SHAW AFB SC PRIORITY  
RBDHDZA/COMUSNAVCENT PRIORITY  
RHMFISS/COMSOPCENT MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY  
RHMFISS/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY  
RUCAICL/MARCENT HQ ELEMENT MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY

S E C R E T DOHA 000008

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/06/2020  
TAGS: [MARR](#) [MASS](#) [PREL](#) [QA](#)  
SUBJECT: SCENESETTER FOR U.S.- QATAR MILITARY CONSULTATIVE  
COMMISSION

Classified By: Ambassador Joseph E. LeBaron for reasons 1.4 (b and d).

¶1. (C) The eleventh meeting of the U.S. - Qatar Military Consultative Committee (MCC) is scheduled for 11-15 January 2010 in Washington DC. The last MCC between Qatar and the U.S. took place in March 2007. Brigadier General Abdulla Juma'an, Chief of International Relations, (referred to as "General Abdulla"), will lead the Qatar delegation. The Qataris see this MCC as an important demonstration of the U.S. - Qatar strategic relationship reflecting Qatar's commitment to a broad strategic partnership with the United States.

¶2. (S) Below is a brief overview of the major issues and trends in our bilateral relationship with Qatar.

-----  
THE MILITARY TO MILITARY RELATIONSHIP: KEY ISSUES AND TRENDS  
-----

¶3. (SBU) BACKGROUND: Qatar provides the U.S. military rent-free access to two major Qatari military installations, Al Udeid Airbase and Camp As-Sayliyah. Al Udeid is the site of both CENTCOM's Forward Headquarters and Special Operations Command, Central (SOCCENT). Until recently, the U.S. had never made a major defense sale to Qatar. In July 2008 Qatar signed contracts with Boeing for two C-17s with an option for two more, and with Lockheed-Martin for four C-130Js also with an option for two more. The C-17 and C-130 sales could be a signal Qatar may be beginning to invest in its own defensive capabilities, with a preference for U.S.-origin equipment. It has expressed interest in many other systems, most notably integrated air defense equipment.

¶4. (S) DEVELOPMENT OF A NATIONAL MILITARY STRATEGY: We have long believed that Qatar lacks an overarching national military strategy. It has not clarified what it envisions for its military over the next 5, 10, or 20 years. With regard to the US-Qatar mil-mil relationship, it has not suggested what it will do when the DCA comes open for renegotiation in 2012. It has not committed itself to a long-term Foreign Military Sales program. In 2008 GEN Petraeus offered CENTCOM assistance in development of a national military strategy, something the Crown Prince accepted. A senior Qatari delegation traveled to Tampa in August 2009, where they held discussions on the subject. Their next meeting with CENTCOM planners was scheduled for mid-November but was postponed by the Qataris. We are looking to re-engage with them on this subject at the MCC and try for the next meeting in March 2010, either in Doha or Tampa.

15. (S) PROTECTION OF CRITICAL ENERGY INFRASTRUCTURE:

Security of Qatar's oil and natural gas infrastructure, especially the North Field off the northern tip of the country, and the on-shore gas liquefaction facilities at Ras Laffan, are of high interest to the U.S. Armed smuggling, piracy, and potential terrorist activity in the North Field would be felt around the world. Protection of these assets figures prominently in Qatar's vision for an integrated air and missile defense system.

16. (S) INTEGRATED AIR AND MISSILE DEFENSE SYSTEM: Three times since 1999 Qatar has expressed interest in purchasing elements of a missile defense system, including PATRIOT, only to back away after significant time and expense was invested by both them and the US. The current round of interest began in June 2008 with six Letters of Request for Price and Availability (PnA) data on PATRIOT, THAAD, MEADS, SL-AMRAAM; a site survey and defense analysis; and for a bilateral working group. The working group met throughout the fall of 2008 but progress ultimately halted after Qatar refused to fund a site survey (required under the FMS process). Movement has begun again since September 2009 with DSCA agreeing to provide PnA data for PATRIOT per the 2008 LOR, but Qatar still balks at funding a survey. There is more to this than meets the eye: some of Qatar's intransigence is likely due to bargaining, but also to insecurity as it wishes, as Qatar sees it, to be treated the same as Kuwait and UAE, with whom the US apparently has shared some initial IADS costs.

17. (C) CUSTOMS AND IMMIGRATIONS ISSUES: Customs and immigrations problems stemming from Qatari concerns related to sovereignty over Al Udeid Airbase will continue to plague

the mil-mil relationship for some time to come, although the Crown Prince, Sheikh Tamim, and the Qatar Armed Force Chief of Staff, Major General Al-Attiyeh, have pledged to work with U.S. counterparts to put in place reliable procedures and enforce them. Late last year the U.S. Mission in Qatar formed a USG civilian-military interagency synchronization group for joint pol-mil engagement with the Qataris on the civilian and military customs and immigration issues faced by the Embassy and the US military. We have begun active engagement with the Qatari interagency on these issues and hope that the upcoming MCC discussions will assist in taking that engagement to the next level, bringing us closer to finding strategic solutions to these persistent problems.

18. (S) LAIRCM (Large Aircraft Infrared Countermeasure): There are two issues with LAIRCM: LAIRCM for Qatar's Head of State (HoS) aircraft, and LAIRCM for Qatar's C-17s.

a. LAIRCM for Qatar's HoS aircraft: As background, Qatar Airways (not the State of Qatar) submitted Letters of Request (LORs) in July and September 2007 requesting installation of the AN/AAQ-24 (LAIRCM) infra-red counter-measure system on several of their HoS aircraft--2 x A330s, 1 x A340, and 2 x B747-800s. The US Government approval authority for LAIRCM, the OSD(AT&L) Defensive Systems Committee (DSC), denied the request based on the following considerations:

- (S) The classified USAF policy guidelines for export of LAIRCM to non Tier-1 countries requires HoS aircraft to be wholly government-owned, and exclusively used for HoS travel. The Qatar HoS aircraft were owned and operated by Qatar Airways, which is only 50% government owned.

- (S) A comprehensive intelligence assessment, which included Qatar's international relationships, technology protection capability, and security capability, identified a significant risk of technology exploitation.

Qatar reduced the number of aircraft it designates as HOS (to two) and transferred them to the Qatar Emiri Air Force (QEAF) in an effort to address US concerns. It has stated its desire to submit a new request for LAIRCM. OMC Qatar wrote a new draft Letter of Request and gave it to QEAF in Sep 09. To date Qatar has not returned the LOR.

b. (SBU) LAIRCM for Qatar's C-17s Qatar bought two C-17 aircraft via Direct Commercial Sales from Boeing, and understood that those aircraft would come with the LAIRCM system installed. Shortly before delivery of the C-17s in Aug 09, Qatar learned that LAIRCM was an after-market add-on and their planes would be delivered without the system. Anticipating that Qatar will not be approved LAIRCM for its C-17 aircraft, CENTCOM in coordination with SAF/IA and DSCA has urged Qatar to consider ELIAS (Enhanced Large Aircraft IRCM Solutions) as an alternative.

c. (SBU) In late Dec 09, Brigadier General Abdulla Juma'an requested a LAIRCM capabilities brief at the January MCC. SAF/IA has replied that it will not brief the LAIRCM system until Qatar submits an LOR.

¶9. (C) CAS SECURITY CONTRACT WITH DYNCORPS: DynCorps holds the security contract for Camp As Sayliyah (CAS). Its ability to employ armed guards comes from a legal waiver granted to it annually by the Qatar government. In anticipation of a change to Qatari law, the Qatar Armed Forces advised CAS on 10 Dec 09 that it would not extend the waiver past the end of the year.

Since then, ARCENT has requested that QAF extend the waiver another year; or, failing that, an extension of 90 days to allow it to organize an alternative force protection plan. QAF has so far granted an extension of the waiver through January 2010.

¶10. (S) Following are the key trends over the next three years that we believe will have the greatest impact on our military relationship:

-- (S) Qatar will continue to modernize its (tiny) military through the purchase of U.S. weapons systems, though competition will continue from the French, British, and others. However, these defense purchases will be made in the context of a frugal military budget.

-- (S) Economic and human development will remain Qatar's top spending priorities, and we have heard that military purchases will be on a slower track. This slower-track approach will be a notable factor in their calculations as they deliberate on which air missile defense system to purchase and how many units.

-- (S) Qatari leadership will seek to enhance the prestige of its military within the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and the international arena, but has no clearly defined strategy for doing so. Likewise, Qatar is attracted to the latest military systems, even while its military modernization is not guided by a national security strategy.

-- (S) We expect that the biggest factor in our engagement in the near-term will be Qatar's sensitivity to the large, enduring U.S. military presence. While Qatar's leadership regards our presence as a permanent and necessary deterrent to the aggression of surrounding states, principally Iran and Saudi Arabia, it does expose it to regional criticism and, potentially, to terrorist attack.

-- (S) Qatar will continue to face a formidable challenge staffing its military with Qataris because there are so few of them, and because more attractive opportunities exist elsewhere in the government and the private sector. The continued dependence on foreign nationals, particularly in the enlisted ranks, will continue to present concerns about transfers of sensitive U.S. technology.

-- (C) Despite occasional tactical irritants, we expect that Qatar will continue to pursue a policy of strengthening and deepening the military relationship at a strategic level through increased combined planning, training, exercises, and operations.

-- (S) Throughout its short history Qatar has relied on the

presence of an outside power (Britain, then the U.S.) to guarantee its security. In addition, demographic realities (the shortage of military-age male citizens to serve in the military) and the lack of any martial tradition in the culture contribute to a national reluctance to be self-reliant in terms of defense. We expect this reluctance to continue and consider it one pillar in Qatar's unwritten military strategy.

-- (S) That said, the current leadership appears to recognize the need to modernize and professionalize its military forces. Qatar recognizes that its foremost strategic center of gravity is the economic wealth derived from hydrocarbon resources. Any threat to the facilities or transport systems that supply that wealth could deeply undermine the government and the country's independence. With that in mind, we believe Qatar wishes to continue to make incremental improvements in all components of its military, with the caveat that such investments will remain subordinate to the primary national goal of economic and human development. We perceive a shift in Qatar's preference for defense equipment from European to American products, and expect this is in part due to the recognition that interoperability with U.S. forces will serve as a force-multiplier for their own troops. Nevertheless, Qatar's desire to be the "friend of everyone and the enemy of no one" means that politics will remain a crucial factor in any defense purchase decision.

-----  
THE U.S.-QATAR RELATIONSHIP  
-----

11. (SBU) The breadth and depth of Qatar's relationship with the U.S. is impressive, especially for a small country of only 1.7 million inhabitants, of whom only about 225,000 are actually Qatari citizens.

-- (SBU) Beyond the mil-mil relationship, the broader economic relationship between Qatar and the United States is important to Qatar. U.S. energy companies have invested tens of billions of dollars in the oil and gas industry here. Qatar, which holds the third largest natural gas reserves in the world after Iran and Russia, will soon be one of the most important suppliers of imported liquefied natural gas to the U.S.

-- (U) Because it is so small and its energy resources so large, Qatar has an annual per capita income of over \$60,000, and far more than that, if only Qatari citizens are considered. Even during the recent global financial crisis Qatar's national revenues continued to grow. Qatar now has, according to the IMF, the highest per capita income in the world.

-- (S) Qatar's location, wide-ranging foreign relations, fast-growing economy, and expanding transportation links have made counterterrorism cooperation, including counterterrorist financing, a key aspect of our relationship. Qatar's wealth, in particular, means its citizens are potential sources of money for violent extremists and cooperative efforts to target and prevent these financial flows are central to our bilateral agenda.

-- (SBU) Qatar has committed itself like few other Arab states to modernizing its educational system and has turned decisively to the United States for help. Qatar has imported branch campuses of six U.S. universities, including Texas A&M, Carnegie-Mellon, Weill-Cornell Medical School, Georgetown, Virginia Commonwealth, and Northwestern. It is instituting a U.S. model of charter schools at the elementary and secondary levels.  
LeBaron